

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 10, 2000
EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY AUDITORIUM
Rockville, Maryland

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Gordon A. Aoyagi, Chair
Anita Powell, Vice Chair
Fernando Bren
Robert Freeman
Leonard J. Marco
Ronald Ogens
Tom Carr
Paul Sterling, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Neil Shorb, Staff Director
Beth Feldman, Administrative Specialist
Annette Cheng, Office Services Coordinator
Richard Melnick, OCA

OTHERS PRESENT:

George Giebel, MCFRS
Deputy Chief Larry Gaddis, Bethesda FD
Chief Dennis Urban, Bethesda FD
Steve Lamphier, MCFRS
Chief Roger W. Strock, DFRS
Chief David Dwyer, DVFRS
President Eric Bernard, Rockville VFD
Don & Jo Phillips, Kensington VFD
Lieutenant Dallas Lipp, DFRS
President Virginia Miller, Bethesda FD
John Rives, Wheaton VRS
Chief Jim Jarboe, Takoma Park VFD
District Chief Andy Johnston, DFRS
Chief S. Darron Long, Damascus VFD
Duty Chief Erik Stromberg, Cabin John Park VFD
Chief George Pitts, Jr., Glen Echo VFD
John T. Ferguson, III, Rockville VFD/MCVFRA
Marcine Goodloe, Wheaton VRS

100 - CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Fire and Rescue Commission was called to order by Chairman Aoyagi at 7:10 p.m. in the Lobby Auditorium of the Executive Office Building in Rockville, Maryland.

101- Report of the Chairman

- *Bill 3-00, Property Tax Credit – Fire Sprinkler Systems*

Chair Aoyagi briefed the Commissioners on Bill 3-00, Property Tax Credit – Fire Sprinkler Systems. Bill 3-00, sponsored by the County Council will be introduced on February 1, 2000. The public hearing is tentatively scheduled for March 14. Bill 3-00 would allow Montgomery County homeowners to receive a property tax credit for installation of an automatic fire sprinkler system.

- *Implementation of 800 MHZ Portable Data System*

Lieutenant Dallas Lipp gave a power point presentation on the 800MHZ portable radio system.

- *Professional/Contract Soliciting Agreement*

A copy of Chief Dwyer's memorandum concerning professional/contract solicitations dated January 24, 2000 is included in the agenda packet.

102- *Approval of Minutes of January 10, 2000 Meeting*

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Freeman to approve the minutes of January 10, 2000 meeting of the Fire and Rescue Commission. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Powell and PASSED unanimously.

200- **CONSENT CALENDAR**

201- *Damascus VFD Station 13 Box Area Changes*

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sterling to adopt item 201 – Damascus VFD Box Area Changes of the consent calendar. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Marco and PASSED unanimously.

202- *Dispatch of Thermal Imaging Camera*

Commissioner Ogens requested item 202 – Dispatch of Thermal Imaging Camera be pulled from the Consent Calendar. This item will be discussed in item 301- Operations Committee report.

300- **FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS**

301- *Operations*

Commissioner Ogens reported the Operations Committee met on February 1, 2000. At the meeting, the Committee discussed the revision to Non-Emergency Reassignment of Apparatus policy, the Helicopter Standby policy, the Thermal Imaging Camera dispatch and its review and the Response Assignment to Automatic Home Fire Alarms.

- *Dispatch of Thermal Imaging Camera*

Commissioner Ogens reported at its May 13 meeting, the FRC approved the automatic dispatch of the closest unit with a thermal imaging camera to the following incidents: second alarm fires, when requested by the incident commander, or a report of person(s) trapped in a

structure fire for a 90 day trial period. The Operations Committee is reviewing the effectiveness of thermal imaging cameras.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Freeman to continue the thermal imaging dispatch until the review is completed by the Operations Committee. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Ogens and PASSED with Commissioners Carr, Freeman, Marco, Powell, Sterling and Ogens voting for the motion and Commissioner Bren abstaining from the vote.

302- Human Resources, Safety and Training

Commissioner Powell reported that the Human Resources, Safety and Training Committee met on February 7, 2000. Items discussed were: Revision to Code of Ethics and Personal Conduct Executive Regulation, Development of New Training Classes. Due to the length of the Committee meeting, updates on the subcommittee reports were deferred to the March HRST meeting.

303- Finance, Technology and Planning

Commissioner Bren reported that the Finance, Technology and Planning Committee met on January 20, 2000. The Subcommittees continue to move forward with on-going activities. Commissioner Bren stated the FTP Committee is formulating the mission statement of the Committee and its subcommittees. The meetings have been held with two consultants to discuss the strategic planning process.

400- **BUSINESS ITEMS**

401- Senator Amoss Fund Policy and Procedure

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ogens to adopt the Senator Amoss Fund procedure. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Sterling and PASSED unanimously.

402- Emergency Management-Based Reporting System (EMBRs) a.k.a. FIRES

At the December 9, 1999 Fire and Rescue Commission meeting, the FRC deferred discussion on EMBRS security to allow members of the BCCRS the opportunity to present their concerns on this issue. MCFRS staff attempted to meet with BCCRS on several occasions over the last month. During the one meeting that occurred, the BCCRS representative requested a copy of the final report which contained specific design and configuration specifications. The report is a confidential document due to its sensitive content. The BCCRS provided their written list of concerns to the Fire Administrator on February 1, 2000. Staff is in the process of responding to questions and coordinating the responses with DIST. Chair Aoyagi requested to defer discussion on this item until the next monthly FRC meeting.

403- Non-Emergency Reassignment of Apparatus Policy

Commissioner Ogens suggested the following changes:

- page FRC-2, sec.3.b: change entire definition – Chiefs Committee. Chief Officers of the LFRDs and DFRS for use as a resource to the Division Chiefs and the Fire Administrator
- page FRC-5, sec.5.e.1: add *and the LFRD Duty Officer. The District Chief must contact* after the District Chief; delete *who must contact*
- page FRC-6, sec.5.f: change *assigned* to *reassigned*

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ogens to adopt the Non-Emergency Reassignment of Apparatus policy and rescind the existing Non-Emergency Reassignment of Apparatus executive regulation #20-96 dated 6/24/97. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Marco and PASSED unanimously.

404- SOP for Helicopter Landing Policy

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Carr to adopt the Standard Operating Procedures for Helicopter Landing Policy No. 24-08, subject to applicable collective bargaining procedures. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Freeman and PASSED unanimously.

405- Response Assignment to Automatic Home Fire Alarms

Chair Aoyagi reported the Operations Committee discussed this issue at its February committee meeting. The staff disagrees with the Operations Committee's recommendation to modify the dispatch to automatic home fire alarms to the closest engine and the next closest primary unit (i.e. engine, ladder truck, tower, quint, or rescue squad) until the review of call types is completed by the Communications Committee. Chair Aoyagi stated that the Operations Committee could then review the Communications Committee recommendations based upon the analysis on the number of automatic home fire alarms received and the number of automatic home fire alarms resulting in a working fire before recommending changes to this policy. Chair Aoyagi noted we should balance the public safety with the fiscal policy as well as the safety of our personnel.

Chief Urban commented that there is a flaw in the process. He stated the Operations Committee made changes to the IECS policy that the Chiefs Committee had previously recommended at the Operations Committee meeting in January. However, the Chiefs Committee did not have an opportunity to review those changes. He stated the process is further flawed tonight with the recommendation noted in item 405- Response Assignment to Automatic Home Fire Alarms. As Chair of the Chiefs Committee and Chief of the Bethesda FD, he disagrees staff should make recommendation on operational matter. He advised the background information should reflect the fact that the Fire Administrator disagrees with the change to this policy.

Chair Aoyagi stated the process is not flawed. The Chiefs Committee is an advisory group and should not presume they have policy making authority over the FRC. The FRC duly, faithfully embraces the process of consultation and coordination. The FRC listens and hears the advice that is received from the Chiefs Committee but the FRC is not compelled in making its policy decision to follow the direction of the Chiefs Committee. The Committee is one of many points of view which must be balanced in adopting policies affecting MCFRS and the public.

With regard to staff, Chair Aoyagi stated he is the staff of the FRC. The Charter specifically stated the staff implements policy of the FRC and it is the role of the Fire Administrator to implement that policy through staff. He further stated if staff disagrees with him, as Fire Administrator, he would make the decision about what he believes is appropriate for the service and would take appropriate action in representing what he believes in the best interest for the service.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ogens to adopt the dispatch to automatic home fire alarms to the closest engine and the next closest primary unit (i.e. engine, ladder truck, tower, quint, or rescue squad) until the review of call types is completed. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Powell and FAILED with Commissioner Ogens voting for the motion, Commissioners Bren, Carr, Freeman, Marco, Powell and Sterling voting against.

500- FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES REPORTS

501- DVFRS Chief

Chief Dwyer reported the Request for Proposal (RFP) for LOSAP study is in the hand of the procurement office. The annual valor award luncheon will take place in April.

With regard to the soliciting survey, Chief Dwyer reported letters were sent out to the LFRDs and to date, the MCVFRA, the MCCFROA and nine LFRDs replied to the survey.

Chief Dwyer reported he received a complaint from a citizen regarding the fire siren going off at the Bethesda FD.

502- DFRS Chief

Chief Strock reported the Recruit Class 16 graduates on March 10. The Recruit Class 17 will commence on February 14, 31 recruits are scheduled to report to that class. He also reported that both volunteer Essentials classes will run this semester; the Firefighter Officer II class was cancelled due to the low enrollment. However, the PSTA was able to reserve 12 seats for this class in Frederick County. Individuals who are interested may contact the PSTA.

503- Report of the Fire Board

Mr. Bernard of the Fire Board reported the Fire Board will add a type of work session at each meeting with all the committees when there is an issue to discuss. He advised the wife of Mickey Harris, a life member of Glen Echo FD, passed away after a lengthy illness.

Mr. Bernard also reported planning for the Montgomery County agricultural fair is underway. Ms. Goodloe is heading up this project. Lastly, the second annual volunteer retreat will take place on April 7 and 9. Response cards were sent out to all the LFRDs.

504- Report of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Association

FRC Meeting
February 10, 2000

Ms. Goodloe reported on behalf of the Executive Committee, the President and the Association, she expressed her appreciation to Fire Administrator Aoyagi for his assistance on the Senator William Amoss Fund procedure.

505- Report of the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters

There was no report.

**A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sterling to adjourn the meeting. MOTION
SECONDED by Commissioner Marco and PASSED unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon A. Aoyagi,
Fire Administrator